

Letter From A Mother

Erickson Educational Foundation
4047 Hundred Oaks Ave.
Baton Rouge, La. 70808

LETTER FROM A MOTHER

Dear Zelda:*

This is a day out of my life different from every other day . . . following yesterday which was unique from all the rest. And you played a part in it all . . . from such a distance, yet I can only say that in your work it is as if you were placing your hand in the hand of God and together you are continuing His work of creating.

What does this mean? It means that yesterday when I went to the airport to meet my son, his plane arrived on schedule, but I did not see him alight. Instead, a tall and radiantly beautiful girl walked right up to me . . . the first one off the plane . . . and said calling me by name, "Your son will meet you at the car, you are to please come with me right away." She spoke softly, but firmly, and with such a light of brimming over joy on her face, that I felt everything must be all right and followed her. As we approached the parked car, I said, "Where is he?" "There he is," she replied. When I did not see him, she said, "Let me wait in the car." He will come to you." I hesitated. She put her arm around my waist and said very softly, "Don't you know me, Mother? I am your son. I've been here all the time." Still, a mysterious smile was on her lips, and the expression was of a person waiting to give a precious gift, cherishing the moment, reluctant to disclose it all, yet unable to withhold it any longer. My thoughts were confused as I seated her in the front seat, kept firm hold on my keys, and still looked about for my son. "But you are not my son," I said. I do know he is not so tall." "I have on heels," she said. "Mother, look into my eyes; don't you recognize me?" I laughed. This must be his girl, this radiant creature, playing a little joke on me. "No, I do not recognize you, but I have to say you are the most beautiful girl I have ever seen." She drew herself over to the car window and the eyes and the voice implored me now, "Please, please get into the car." Then I sat down and turned to her . . . searching in the delicately chiseled young face for my son. "Show me your hands," I asked, and . . . yes, there I found the identifying scar. Then, I listened to the music of that gentle voice, and there was something familiar. The eyes were and were not the same. Those long, curly lashes had made a change. But that smile, that glance, that sweet, chuckly amused look. There he was. The same radiant spirit of my precious son I had come to meet. "Didn't you know, Mother, I have always wanted to be a girl?"

(Oh, God, I prayed, help me to share his joy! Let me not hurt his moment of giving his new self . . . so honestly to me. My God, my God, what agony for all these years has he undergone . . . and so manfully. Let me be equal to his moment of joy.) Then I laughed and exclaimed, "How wonderful. Welcome home!"

I sat a moment before starting up the car, just to be certain I was steady. "What a relief," she said. "Mom, I thought you might faint. I never dreamed I'd fool you. Do you think anybody else will recognize me?" "Impossible," I said. "If you can fool your mother . . . you can fool anyone."

Then we drove home and he began to recount to me the struggle of many years he had been through . . . and the doctors and the psychiatrists he had been to see to discover why he felt as he did when he was searching for the root of his mystifying feelings. It was such a help, he said, that I had told him only recently how much I admired Jung and his psychology of the self and the idea of the inner and the outer life of the individual. Had I not guessed the nature of this visit, my son asked, after our recent discussion of that article on Jung we had just read?

Home at last, we continued our conversation of the discovery of the self identity.

"But you are not a deviate," I asserted. I know you well enough to be certain of that." "No, I am a psychic hermaphrodite . . . I was born with the body of a male . . . but the psyche of a woman and my deepest wish is to be a woman. Today science has learned that one out of every so many hundred thousand cases may have the psyche of one sex in the body of the opposite sex. I feel trapped in the wrong body. I have been studied for years . . . I went to Johns Hopkins . . . and to many top ranking psychiatrists. As long as my psyche could not be changed to match my natural sex, science is finding ways to adjust the body to match the psyche. I simply am too unhappy as I am to go on living a constructive and productive life . . . so I wish to become a female and then I will be able to realize some of my long desired goals."

We discussed at great length the successive steps needed to accomplish this change, and after dinner we both began to relax.

"I hope I didn't let you down at the airport," I said. "No," she replied, "Mother, you were fine!"

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And so my precious one has come home . . . and this was, I told her, the greatest tribute paid to me by anyone . . . except when my late husband proposed to me. The way ahead will be new, risky, hard at times, . . . yes: but for my precious one, it shall never again be ALONE.

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Thanks, dear God, that my offering of my Holy Communion up for the guidance of my son, who I felt was wrestling with something too complex to handle alone: thanks to Thee, for You have been giving guidance all along!

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Then, dear Zelda (please forgive this letter if it has become a little disjointed), then he gave me a book and a file of articles and clippings going back to earlier than 1952 on the subject of medical, psychological, and cosmetic aid being given to persons in a similar circumstance. In it was your dear note . . . that I might, if I wished, call you. I have to call you Zelda, by your first name, for you have been holding the hand of my child and your other hand has been, I feel, in the hand of God.

My husband did explain something to me when he was alive, of the threshold of another sex upon which many persons are born; and how much these individuals suffer and how deeply they deserve our every aid. I believe, had he lived, he would have welcomed this opportunity for the chance my child will have to release her true self.

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Yes, I am crying, Zelda, but they are tears of joy. Tears for the miracle of help for a suffering soul. In heaven, Christ said, there is no male nor female. His immortal soul is intact. All will be well. I shall be standing by. Will I help? Does a mother's love ever die? Not if it is directed toward the child.

Thank you, Zelda, and tell the other suffering and confused parents of children and adults in this similar situation to have faith and direct their help and love to promoting this pioneer and godly work in self-discovery.

In Gratitude,

*Zelda Suplee is the Assistant Director of Erickson Educational Foundation.